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104 West Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301-1713 • 850.224.3427

2016 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Regional planning councils have been in existence in Florida since the early 1960s, created by the local governments they serve, to meet local government and regional needs, provide services, and ensure access to state and federal initiatives and programs. Florida Statutes recognize regional planning councils as *"Florida's only multipurpose regional entities that plan for and coordinate intergovernmental solutions on multi-jurisdictional issues, support regional economic development, and provide assistance to local governments."*

The Florida Regional Councils Association, an alliance of Florida's 10 regional planning councils, serves to strengthen the consistency and quality of regional planning council programs to ensure economic prosperity and add value to local, regional, and state initiatives. To that end, the Florida Regional Councils Association Policy Board adopted the following priorities for the 2016 Legislative Session:

Talent Supply & Education

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** enhanced economic competitiveness, which must include an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) in public education and training programs that are aligned with existing and emerging job markets and industry clusters.

Innovation & Economic Development

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** full funding of regional planning councils to, at a minimum, leverage the role of regional planning councils as federally designated economic development districts; provide support to state and regional economic development initiatives and activities; provide assistance to local economic development organizations; and, cover the costs of statutory responsibilities.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** retaining the existing statutory authorities and responsibilities vested in RPCs.

Infrastructure & Growth Leadership

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** a continued state and regional role in helping local governments accommodate future growth while ensuring economic prosperity and preparing for and responding to emergencies and natural disasters.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** future transportation corridors, a diverse and competitive statewide multi-modal transportation network, and sustainable sources of transportation funding that are consistent with and support regional visions and further the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies of Florida's 10 federally designated Economic Development Districts.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** a comprehensive state climate change action plan, with energy policies and other funding initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases and to address ecosystem sustainability, long-term water supply, flood protection, public health and safety, adaptation and mitigation, infrastructure needs, and economic prosperity.

The Florida Regional Councils Association supports maintaining and protecting the integrity of all Trust Funds for their stated use.

Business Climate & Competitiveness

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** a strong, but fair development impact mitigation process that addresses extra-jurisdictional impacts and impacts to natural resources of regional significance and other regional resources and facilities; preserves the role of regional planning councils as conveners and their right to collect fees for services; utilizes regional planning councils' dispute resolution processes; and, protects the entitlements and vested development rights necessary for large-scale, long-term financial investments.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** changes to the Sector Plan process that would provide regional planning councils with a fee for service funding mechanism to allow them to participate in the process in a more meaningful capacity; require regional planning councils to convene all affected parties in the process; and, create a role for regional planning councils in the Detailed Specific Area Plan process to ensure all regional issues are addressed.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** unlimited ability of a regional planning council to provide planning and technical services for a fee, in furtherance of its mission.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** streamlining state regulatory review processes while ensuring regional and local interests are taken into consideration.

Civic & Governance Systems

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** the positions and policies of organizations that share a common membership with regional planning councils including the Florida Association of Counties, Florida League of Cities, Small County Coalition, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, and which are of mutual interest and concern.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** efforts to improve efficiency and collaboration among agencies tasked with multi-jurisdictional planning throughout the state.

The Florida Regional Councils Association (FRCA) **opposes** any further revisions to Florida's growth management laws without first evaluating the impact of the 2011-2015 changes have had on the economy, the environment, local and regional infrastructure, and community development. Accordingly, until such an evaluation takes place, FRCA **opposes** any legislation further reducing state planning oversight; preempting local planning decisions; or limiting the ability of regional planning councils to identify and address multi-jurisdictional development impacts, coordinate intergovernmental solutions addressing these impacts, or carry out regional impact review and comment responsibilities related to DRI-scale development.

Quality of Life & Quality Places

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** regional visioning as a means to guide the future of Florida, build public/private coalitions to implement key regional and statewide initiatives, and serve as the basis for strategic statewide planning and budgeting initiatives.

The Florida Regional Councils Association **supports** a balanced distribution of funds under Amendment 1 for land acquisition and for water quality and quantity projects throughout the state, with equitable allocation irrespective of a project's urban or rural nature, or its coastal or inland location.